

UMBUNDU KINSHIP AND CHARACTER

132 are divided into several sub-zones. A glance at the map¹ reproduced herewith will give a fairly good idea of the climatic regions. This map, apparently based entirely upon temperature averages and relative humidity in the localities for which such data are to be had,² is useful for an approximation of the principal zones and sub-zones. The names given to the several zones and sub-zones, however, are somewhat misleading, and the data on which the map is based are insufficient to assure accuracy.

The mean annual rainfall varies from 1,000 mm. (40 inches) to 1,500 mm. (60 inches) according to region² and locality. In the Highland the rains begin with a few showers during September and usually set in heavily during October. During November they increase in intensity and then suffer a break of from two to four weeks in December, January, or February. Then they continue until the end of April with sometimes a few showers in May. The heaviest fall is often in November or December, but sometimes in March. There seems to be some sort of cycle of morning, afternoon, and night rains, but I know of no study on this subject. Afternoon and evening rains are more common. Night rains seem to be more common towards the end of the season. Morning rains

• 512 are least frequent. A day in which rain begins near (or before) 132 daybreak and continues well into the day is called in Umbundu *ulembi*. On such a day agricultural work and travel are suspended.

[431] There is a custom that on such a day the first, after greeting, to speak the word *ulembi* can claim a gift from the one to whom he says it. The number of days in which work or travel may be suspended on account of rain is relatively not large. The working day is customarily from early morning until mid-afternoon. Men often continue field-work later in the day than do women. The connexion of the working day with weather conditions is readily seen.

132 Whether the heavier rainfall occurs in November-December or in February-March, it is in March and April that transportation is most likely to be interfered with. That is the time of swollen

¹ See Dr. José de Oliveira Ferreira Diniz, 'As características climatológicas de Angola' (*Boletim Geral das Colónias*, 1930, no. 62, 63, pp. 3-15).

² See maps and charts of rainfall in H. F. Sharitz and C. F. Marbut, *The Vegetation and Soils of Africa* (New York, 1923); also some figures on rainfall and temperature in J. C. B. Statham, *Through Angola, a Coming Colony* (London, 1922) and in O. Letcher, *South Central Africa*, chap. xiii (Johannesburg, 1932). More detailed treatment of the whole subject is given by Marquardsen u. Stahl, *Angola*, chap. v (Berlin, 1928).

226 spear eight feet long, the end of which consisted of ten sharp prongs
462 of palm stem (Plate LXXIII, Fig. 1).

[171] Near Cangamba in eastern Angola, fishing in the Kwando River occupied numerous men and women of the mixed tribes in the district, namely, Vachokue, Luchazi, and Babunda. Men paddled into midstream in small bark canoes from which fishing operations were directed. The fishermen carried small conical string nets, which were attached to stakes in such a way that the openings of the nets faced upstream. Vachokue women, working in pairs, dragged baskets against the current (Plate LXXXV, Figs. 1, 2).

AGRICULTURE AND COOKING

343 *Osila* is the Umbundu word for the granary which stands on
243 wooden supports (Plate XLIV, Fig. 1); this *osila* is for the restricted family, and there is one *osila* for every house. The Ovimbundu store their corn in bulk, but in the Esole country I noted that the cobs themselves were carefully packed. Each Ovimbundu girl cultivates a small patch of ground, the produce of which she is at liberty to sell in order to buy brass ornaments, beads, and palm oil.

[432] In addition to maize, barley, oats, and wheat, with here and there a little rye, are occasionally grown. There are three colors of beans, red, white, and black. There is no attempt to keep the varieties separate, so they cross-fertilize freely. The Ovimbundu try to cultivate a surplus of beans and maize which they use to pay their taxes to the Portuguese, likewise to sell at the stores of traders.

252 Corn is pounded on the rock which has been used for generations
512 after it has been consecrated by sprinkling the blood of a chicken. Pounding begins as early as five o'clock in the morning, before sunrise, and from that time to sunset the pounding-rock is in use. The rock is evidently regarded as a meeting place for social intercourse; it is undoubtedly the center of village gossip so far as the women are concerned (Plate XXXVI, Fig. 2).

As corn alone is considered a poor food, it is sprinkled on boiling water to which beans are added. Cooking goes on from early morning to sunset over a slow fire. Children sometimes receive as their evening meal a thick plastic cake of mushed corn to which green leaves of a squash are added.

252 There are five kinds of manioc resembling one another in general appearance, but the Ovimbundu distinguish the plants, and reserve for each what they consider to be appropriate preparation. The method varies for sweet and bitter varieties of manioc.

412 fatigue is avoided by the method of holding and swinging so that the work of crushing is done by the weight of the implement.

412 Two less usual methods of pulverizing grain are by use of a long
252 pestle, which is worked up and down in a heavy wooden mortar as shown by Plate LXXXIV, Fig. 1, in which Vachokuc women are so employed, and the crushing of grain with a cylindrical stone which is rolled on a flat slab. This latter method I judge to be very old, for on a pre-Umbundu site encircled by stone walls I have seen flat slabs of stone and cylindrical rollers. Some of the flat slabs were worn extremely thin in the middle and a few were perforated by the friction.

[782] It is noteworthy that there are rocks especially reserved for the pounding of grain with the wooden mallet. Such rocks are to be found close to every village, and the dedication of a new rock for this purpose requires the killing of a chicken whose blood is sprinkled on the rock.

252 Work of this kind is begun before daybreak. From that time to
[512] sunset the pounding of the wooden mallets, accompanied by the singsong of the women, marks the progress of the day's work. At intervals the pounded grain is sifted through the hands and spread out on a basket-work tray, which is shaken to separate the fine meal. The unbroken and partly broken grain is replaced on the rock for further pounding. A small brush of grass is used for bringing together the grain which is dispersed by the blows.

412 The sole implement used in agriculture, which is entirely in the
171 hands of women, is the hoe. Of this implement there are several
[862] variations according to locality. The Ovimbundu and others of Ngalangi employ the form illustrated in Plate XIII, Fig. 10. The long handles measuring 85 cm no doubt reduce fatigue by minimizing bending. Both hands are used, and, furthermore, the increased length of the handles must give a greater leverage. The smaller hoe used by Ovimbundu women of Elende has short handles only 51 cm (Plate XIII, Fig. 9), while that from the Esole country is distinguished by a broader blade and still shorter handles only 36 cm in length.

412 Included in the outfit of every Umbundu home is the heavy wooden floor beater. This implement, which is fashioned from a single piece of wood, consists of a narrow handle, round in cross section, and a flat portion for beating the moist, newly made, mud floor of the hut. The total length is about 83 cm.

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rate hut is provided as a kitchen. In some dark corner of the hut there is likely to be a sitting hen or a bitch with pups. Goats and pigs intrude from time to time. Lean dogs scavenge round the doorway. Naked little children whitened with dust play on the floor. A woman crouches over the cooking pot stirring the glutinous mass of corn meal. About sunset men are gathering in the council house to which their meals are sent.

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They push forward the logs into the fire, throw their blankets around them and chatter until the women and children arrive with the evening meal. In the vicinity of the village, boys are wandering about with blunt wooden arrows fitted to their bowstrings, to be ready for the homeward flight of birds. Other boys are driving cattle to the kraal.

As darkness falls the long tubular drums are brought out. These are held between the legs and played in compound rhythm (Plate XXVII, Fig. 1). A shuffling dance begins, slowly at first, then with increasing vigor, to be continued far into the night.

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